

detailed information, which we released to the public 2 weeks ago. And the Republicans were in on all of our investigation. They were invited to question the witnesses, to be present, to even see our majority report in advance.

We wanted to make this bipartisan and fair, and we did. And what we found was the President's failed attempt to take over the Department of Justice—to force them to go to the States and say: Don't validate the 2020 election.

A few people stood up and showed courage at the Department of Justice and said they were prepared to resign before they bent to President Trump's pressure, and that was a fact.

That is what we are faced with now—this former President still marketing his lies across America about the outcome of the 2020 election, and we will not even take the time to discuss elections and voting. The Republicans will stop us with a filibuster.

Many politicians in many States continue to use the Big Lie of the stolen election to try to make it harder for citizens to vote in future elections.

According to the Brennan Center for Justice, 19 States passed 33 bills to make it harder for citizens to vote, so far this year.

Hundreds of similar bills have been proposed in 49 States. These laws and proposals are a dagger at the heart of America's democracy.

The Freedom to Vote Act, which we want to start the conversation on, just the conversation and debate on tomorrow, is America's democracy defense act.

I want to commend the bill's sponsors: Senator AMY KLOBUCHAR. I don't know anybody who has worked harder than she has as chair of the Senate Rules Committee; Senator MANCHIN, he has been involved in the compromise; Senators TIM KAINE, ANGUS KING, and Rev. RAPHAEL WARNOCK.

And particularly I want to acknowledge our majority leader, CHUCK SCHUMER, for his leadership in this effort. He has worked hard at it, trying to bring this matter before the American people and on the floor.

We have also been engaged in a similar process on an equally critical piece of legislation, the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

I have been here long enough to remember a time when the Voting Rights Act came before the U.S. Senate and got 98 votes—virtually all the Democrats, all the Republicans voted for it. No controversy. They believed that this product of the 1960s civil rights debate was fair. It said that in certain States with a proven history of discrimination against minority voters, when they proposed changes in election laws, we would examine them, preclear them, as they say.

The Supreme Court tossed out that section, and we have tried to restore it. I think the Supreme Court was wrong and maybe even naive in believing that

voter discrimination could not take place in the future.

When there was a voter suppression law passed in North Carolina and it was taken to a Federal court, the court said, and I paraphrase: They worked with “surgical precision” to violate the voting rights of minority voters.

The Freedom to Vote Act is the first of two crucial steps to take what our friend and colleague John Lewis said is a “precious, almost sacred” right, and I hope we take similar action on the Voting Rights soon.

Like the Freedom to Vote Act, the Voting Rights Act extension that Ronald Reagan signed in 1982 was the result of a compromise. In signing it, President Reagan said the final bill “prove[d] that differences can be settled in good will and good faith.”

Wouldn't that be nice to have that happen on this empty floor of the Senate tomorrow? That is all we ask of our Senate colleagues. Don't use the filibuster, the weapon of Jim Crow, to abet the attacks we are seeing on Americans' voting rights.

Offer amendments if you like, but work with us in good will and good faith to protect the voting rights which so many have sacrificed for.

INFLATION

Mr. President, the Republican minority leader came to the floor a few minutes ago and once again spoke about inflation. And of course we are concerned about it, and we are watching it closely.

We are in an unusual place where we are recovering from a pandemic and the economy is getting back on its feet. And, yes, there are problems. We see supply chain problems addressed by President Biden just this week. We know things are stacked up trying to get into the United States.

That was possibly unavoidable in the midst of a pandemic, when customer demand cratered, and now it is recovering and our demand outstrips the supplies that are flowing into our country.

But I also want to remind the Republican leader from Kentucky that his opposition to extend the debt ceiling, unfortunately, is also a problem when it comes to inflation. If there is uncertainty as to whether this Nation will pay its just debts, obviously that will be reflected in the financial markets and higher interest rates. So the strategy of Senator MCCONNELL, when it comes to the debt ceiling, is pro-inflationary itself.

Also, he talks about the “socialist spending spree” of the reconciliation bill, Build Back Better. And he says in critical terms that the Democrats argue that the cost of this will be “zero dollars.” He says that what Democrats don't say is they have to impose massive tax hikes for this to happen.

Well, I might say to the Senator from Kentucky, we have been very open about what our tax policy would be to pay for Build Back Better.

That policy would say those making over \$400,000 a year in income would

have to pay higher taxes. Yes, we have said it. Those people would have to pay higher taxes. And corporations that are escaping their just tax liability would now have to pay their fair share, too. In those two instances, we are raising taxes, but the taxes don't touch the working people in this country or those in lower income categories.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. President, he says—these are his words—Democrats are waging a war on affordable energy. I want to just reflect on the words “affordable energy.” It is true that we have ample energy resources in most places in America, but to argue that they are affordable is to fail to take into account what the costs of climate change are in America and around the world.

It is not affordable for us to have so many greenhouse gas emissions and fossil fuels that we are creating extreme weather events all across the world. And we have seen them here in the United States. We have seen the fires in your State of California and in the Northwest; we have seen the flooding all across the country, including the Midwest; we have seen violent weather occurring at times of the year when historically it never occurs; and we are paying a heavy price for climate change, global warming, and the fact that we are so dependent on fossil fuels.

So when the Democrats—it used to be another bipartisan issue—and it no longer is—but when the Democrats sound the alarm about climate change and global warming, it is because current energy sources are not affordable in terms of the future of our planet. We have to find a better way.

I am sorry to see so many current politicians unable or unwilling to accept their responsibility to change this country and the world for the better and to leave an Earth, a planet, an environment that our kids can live in. I don't think that is too much to ask, and I think we ought to do our part.

IRS

Mr. President, the last thing Senator MCCONNELL went into this morning was giving new powers to the IRS to snoop.

Well, I guess that is true in some respects. We believe that people who owe taxes ought to pay them, and the vast majority of American families are honest; they want to do their civic duty. They file their taxes on time and try to pay every penny they are supposed to—not more, but every penny they are supposed to.

And yet there are many hiding their assets, hiding their profits, hiding their revenues, and hiding their money from the IRS. They should be held accountable.

Why should the average American family be held to a higher standard of honesty than the richest people in this country? I think it is only fair that everyone be held to the same standard.